

**GRADUATE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION
COMPARATIVE HISTORICAL EXAM
August 28, 2006**

Directions:

Answer ONE question from each section. No one essay should exceed 8 pages and the total length should not exceed 20 pages. Be sure to include a list of references for each essay.

General Approaches:

1. Discuss the differing perspectives on the role of causal theory in comparative historical sociology? Review and critique these positions making sure to clearly articulate your own position. Employ several empirical examples in crafting your argument.
2. Pick the 5 most significant books written since 1965. Explain why they are critical and how they changed the field of comparative historical sociology. What are the similarities and differences between these books? As a set what do they say about the field—its past, present and future?
3. Discuss the different views on the use of narrative in comparative-historical sociology and the different roles of narratives in generating social science theories. Cite empirical studies to make your point.

Research Design:

1. Identify an unresolved problem in any one area of comparative historical research. Outline the competing theoretical arguments noting all relevant studies and then design research that would adjudicate them. Be sure to provide/defend your detailed research strategy noting general approach, independent and dependent variables, sources of data, mode of analysis, etc.

Substantive Debates (students receive ONLY their questions):

- a. The literatures on nationalism and ethnicity have obvious points of overlap and connection. How do sociologists in these different sub-field distinguish their scholarship? How have the literatures on nationalism and ethnicity informed each other? Explain how the theory and methods from one have contributed or failed to contribute to the advancement the other. What potential ways can further integration of these fields move them forward in the future? Use specific empirical examples to make your argument.
- b. What is the role of collective identity and memory in studies of nationalism? Use specific examples to build your case.

- c. How might we apply the insights from the new economic sociology (and in particular discussion in the work of Fligstein and Dobbin) to understand war as an institution?
- d. How are nations “imagined communities”? And what role does the state play in this process of imagination? Use specific examples in making your argument.
- e. Discuss the similarities and differences between the current wave of globalization and the past one in the late 19th century and the early 20th century by making a comparison between these two waves on two specific topics.
- f. Make a comparison of market transitions between China and the former Soviet Union/Eastern European countries, and demonstrate the cross-national variations of the marketization process and discuss how such cross-national variations can be attributed to specific histories, social structure, and political organization of each transitioning economy.